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Programme 18
Economic and social development in Western Asia

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Overall orientation

18.1 The overall orientation of the programme is to foster comprehensive, equitable, integrated and sustainable development and economic and social cooperation in the region, and to maintain and strengthen economic relations between the member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and with other countries of the world. ESCWA is responsible for the implementation of the programme.

18.2 Policy direction for the programme is provided in Economic and Social Council resolutions 1818 (LV) and 1985/69, establishing ESCWA and amending its terms of reference in order to underscore the social functions of the Commission. Further direction is provided in Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/50, in which ESCWA was requested to provide support to member countries in realizing the Millennium Development Goals, including by building capacities to formulate policies, monitor the progress made, measure its impact and prepare regional reports. In addition, in its resolution 269 (XXIV), the Commission requested its Executive Secretary to increase coherence and synergy with other regional United Nations organizations and, through the Commission's lead role in the Regional Coordination Group, foster partnerships and cooperation with those organizations.

18.3 Acting in their dual role as regional arms of the United Nations and parts of their respective regional institutional landscape, ESCWA and the four other regional commissions will continue to pursue their common key objectives, namely, to foster economic integration at the subregional and regional levels, to promote the regional implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and to support regional sustainable development by contributing to bridging economic, social and environmental gaps in their respective member countries and subregions. In order to achieve these objectives, the regional commissions, through their convening power, will continue to generate multilateral dialogue, knowledge-sharing and networking at the regional level, and will work together to promote intraregional and interregional cooperation, both between themselves and through collaboration with other subregional and regional organizations.

18.4 Political instability and lack of adequate reform continue to influence economic performance in the countries of the region. While surplus capital savings in the region have increased as a result of high international energy prices, they have not been invested within the region so as to accelerate its economic and social development. Social policies have not received the level of priority given to the development of economic policies, although experiences around the world have so far proved that an economic "growth-first philosophy" did not necessarily deliver socially stable societies, or achieve an equitable distribution of development dividends. Good governance is another area that requires urgent attention in order to ensure transparent and inclusive policymaking and implementation mechanisms for the effective delivery of public goods and services. Against this backdrop, the region remains in the grip of a widening gap in income and wealth distribution within, as well as between, countries.

18.5 Furthermore, it is envisaged that global climate change will have an adverse impact on the economic and social development of the region, especially when water and agricultural land become less available to fulfil the fundamental needs of

its population. The poor and other vulnerable groups, including women and youth without employment, are expected to suffer most from adverse weather changes, in particular in conflict-stricken areas, further aggravating the instability of the region. In December 2007, the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (a subsidiary body of the League of Arab States) adopted a ministerial declaration on climate change which constitutes the basis for future actions and reflects their position in dealing with climate change issues. The declaration affirms the commitment of the Ministers, inter alia, to include policies to deal with climate change issues in all sectors within national and regional policies for sustainable development in a manner that harmonizes with sustained economic growth and efforts to eradicate poverty, and to adopt national and regional action plans dealing with climate change.

18.6 It is therefore essential for the region to enhance its collective efforts to address those critical issues through ESCWA-promoted regional integration initiatives. In order to accelerate regional economic integration, it is a fundamental necessity to promote intraregional trade and investment, integrate transport and communications infrastructure, harmonize trade and transport facilitation, and coordinate strategies and plans for the development of the information and communications technology sector within the framework of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, which was adopted at the World Summit on the Information Society (Tunis, 2005). Integrated social policies that balance economic development and social needs should also be pursued with insight and vigour.

18.7 The need to enhance statistical institutional capacity continues to be essential if countries in the region are to produce timely, reliable, comparable and increased gender-sensitive statistics for policy and programme formulation, and for monitoring the progress made towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. As the regional arm of the United Nations, ESCWA will continue to advocate gender equality and the advancement of women, paying due attention to regional specificities and values. It will provide full support to member countries in their participation in the Beijing+15 review in 2010 and follow up on its outcomes. Throughout the programme, priority will be given to least developed and conflict-stricken countries.

18.8 In the biennium 2010-2011, ESCWA will pursue the programme objective by promoting economic and social integration at both the subregional and regional levels, and by fostering solidarity in the international political arena and global economy. Such regional integration will be scaled up to cover the Arab region through strategic partnerships with the Economic Commission for Africa Subregional Office for North Africa and with such regional and subregional organizations as the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The programme comprises seven interdependent subprogrammes that focus on four regional priority areas and three cross-cutting issues, which are set forth below:

(a) Stimulating sustainable management of water, energy and other natural resources, with due consideration to climate change;

(b) Promoting integrated social policies;

(c) Stimulating sustainable economic development based on higher productivity and competitiveness and through regional integration and cooperation in a globalizing world;

(d) Accelerating the development, adaptation, diffusion and use of advanced technology;

(e) Enhancing statistical capacity development;

(f) Promoting gender mainstreaming, the advancement of women and their effective participation and involvement;

(g) Giving special consideration to people living in conflict-stricken countries.

18.9 ESCWA will carry out analytical and normative work, building on its accumulated knowledge and multidisciplinary expertise, which will be supported by the provision of technical cooperation. It will also facilitate multilateral dialogue, knowledge-sharing and networking on the outcome of the work of the Commission on national, regional and global development issues, with due consideration to the outcomes of the global meeting on South-South Cooperation to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries. In pursuance of the United Nations global priority, gender mainstreaming will be promoted throughout the programme and within the Commission. Lessons learned from evaluation will serve as the basis for further improvement of the programme, in light of the United Nations commitment to promote evaluation for enhancing learning and accountability.

18.10 It is expected that regional support provided by ESCWA will contribute towards the following:

(a) Increased national capacity to formulate and implement pro-poor, inclusive economic and social policies and programmes, and tackle transboundary issues;

(b) Improved provision of joint responses to multifaceted problems encountered by the countries of the region through the coordinated efforts and consolidated resources of United Nations entities;

(c) Enhanced work of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions in the review and assessment of progress made in implementing the outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields;

(d) Increased knowledge-sharing and South-South cooperation between the countries of the region and with countries in other regions, thereby promoting regional and interregional cooperation.

18.11 Consultations at the level of thematic clusters have taken place between concerned Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs entities, and are expected to lead to better coordination and more collaborative work in the economic and social sectors between programmes in major common work areas of the United Nations Secretariat. At the regional level, ESCWA will lead the Regional Coordination Group in identifying priority areas where the concerned United

Nations entities could provide collective support for development interventions in the ESCWA region, as well as in the broader context of the Arab region.

Subprogramme 1
Integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development

Objective of the Organization: to achieve integrated sustainable management of natural resources in the ESCWA region, with particular emphasis on water, energy and the production sectors, with due consideration to the relevant climate change issues

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Enhanced capacity of member countries to formulate, adopt and implement policies and measures to improve the sustainable management of natural resources, with particular emphasis on fulfilling the Millennium Development Goals and addressing climate change challenges	(a) (i) Increased number of policies and measures adopted and/or implemented by member countries, with ESCWA assistance, to improve the sustainable management of natural resources for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (goals 1 and 7) (ii) Increased number of policies and measures developed, adopted and/or implemented by member countries, with ESCWA assistance, to improve the integrated sustainable management of natural resources, including climate change mitigation and adaptation
(b) Enhanced capacity of member countries to apply best practices and methods for improving sustainable agriculture and rural development, and increasing the productivity and competitiveness of small and medium-scale enterprises using environmentally sound technology	(b) (i) Increased number of institutions applying best practices and methods, with ESCWA assistance, to promote sustainable agriculture and rural development (ii) Increased number of measures taken by small and medium-scale enterprises, with ESCWA assistance, to enhance their competitiveness using environmentally sound technology
(c) Strengthened South-South cooperation in the integrated management of natural resources, with a focus on challenges related to water, energy and climate change	(c) Increased number of responses to and/or initiatives by member countries concerning participation in ESCWA-promoted South-South cooperation in respect of challenges related to water, energy and climate change

Strategy

18.12 The responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies with the Sustainable Development and Productivity Division. The capacity to manage natural

resources in a sustainable manner in the region needs to be developed, in particular, energy, water and land resources, which are being increasingly affected by climate change. This necessitates enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of production and consumption patterns in the water, energy and production sectors, in particular with respect to the use of fossil fuels and associated greenhouse gas emissions, and the use of scarce water resources, adversely affecting their quality. Furthermore, enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of production and consumption patterns in the water and the production sectors, especially agriculture, would also contribute to redressing land degradation and desertification symptoms. Inadequate energy and water supplies and sanitation services in rural, remote and poor urban areas, and limited use of sustainable environmental technologies adversely affect opportunities for employment creation and income generation.

18.13 The subprogramme will concentrate on facilitating the formulation, adoption and implementation of integrated sustainable development strategies and policies in the light of the relevant global mandates arising from the outcome of the 2005 World Summit, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular goal 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) and goal 7 (ensure environmental sustainability), as well as the outcome of the 2007 United Nations Climate Change Conference, held in Bali, Indonesia.

18.14 The subprogramme will continue to:

(a) Advocate and promote sustainable production and consumption patterns of energy and water resources, including improved access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by a wider section of the region's population;

(b) Serve as a forum for promoting policy dialogue related to sustainable development priority issues as a means of enhancing synergy between the countries of the region, including climate change adaptation and mitigation;

(c) Facilitate cooperation between member countries in the management of shared water resources and development of energy networks;

(d) Increase awareness of the possible impact of climate change on water resources, of potential natural disasters and of the precautionary measures required;

(e) Support national and regional capacity-building, especially in the fields of integrated management of water resources, energy efficiency, renewable energy applications, cleaner fossil fuels, sustainable agriculture and rural development;

(f) Facilitate regional coordination and preparation for the implementation of regional and global commitments on sustainable development, in particular on the thematic areas to be addressed by the Commission on Sustainable Development.

18.15 The subprogramme will also support small and medium-scale enterprises in order to enable them to take advantage of opportunities presented by the provision and use of environmentally sound technologies to enhance their productivity and competitiveness in a sustainable manner.

18.16 This will be achieved by undertaking quality research and analytical work; disseminating best practices; building capacity and rendering advisory services on priority sustainable development issues; promoting South-South cooperation through partnerships with other regional commissions and organizations, in particular LAS, GCC, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Regional Office for West Asia, the United Nations secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization; and strengthening ESCWA regional mechanisms for coordination on energy and water as regional forums for advancing such sustainable development issues as those identified in UN-Water and UN-Energy and by the UNEP Environmental Management Group.

Subprogramme 2
Integrated social policies

Objective of the Organization: to strengthen a vision of social policy that is based on social equity and equal opportunity for all, taking into consideration regional specificities and cultural sensitivities

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Enhanced capacity of national Governments to integrate social equity priorities and perspectives in public policies	(a) (i) Increased number of exploratory and follow-up measures pursued by Governments, with ESCWA assistance, indicating increased understanding of social policy options and implications (ii) Increased number of social policy mechanisms and instruments adopted by Governments, with ESCWA assistance
(b) Enhanced capacity of member countries to address the implications of the youth bulge, migration and good urban governance for national policymaking processes, and to adopt relevant policies	(b) (i) Increased number of follow-up measures taken up by member countries, with ESCWA assistance, indicating increased understanding of the socio-demographic implications of the youth bulge for migration and development (ii) Increased number of measures and policy provisions adopted by member countries, with ESCWA assistance, to integrate the youth bulge and migration in development plans and programmes (iii) Increased number of urban governance initiatives undertaken by member countries, with ESCWA assistance, in order to address secure housing for poor persons
(c) Enhanced participation of civil society in the formulation of Government social policy	(c) (i) Increased number of consultative processes, networks and agreements on shared social policy agendas forged with ESCWA assistance

	(ii) Increased number of instances in which civil society institutions, including the media, advocate social issues and participate in social policy processes, with ESCWA assistance

Strategy

18.17 The responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies with the Social Development Division. Experiences around the world have so far proved that a "growth-first philosophy" does not necessarily deliver socially stable societies or achieve equitable, gender-sensitive and environmentally friendly development dividends. On the contrary, countries that have achieved higher social development dividends and sustained equitable social well-being for all ultimately achieved those targets by ensuring synergy between economic and social objectives, adopting an integrated social policy framework that incorporates a policy vision and equal access to basic social and economic services, and establishing mechanisms for consensus-building between public offices and interest groups.

18.18 The aforementioned three-tier structure can best be captured at the following levels:

(a) The vision and public policymaking level, which usually rests with the duty-bearers or Governments and institutions that hold public office and are responsible for formulating, implementing and monitoring public policies, including social policy;

(b) The management and coordination level of social services, provided either directly through Government departments, or indirectly through institutions of civil society at the central and subnational level, prompting a stronger role for civil society institutions in monitoring the impact of public and social policies on different interest groups and society;

(c) From a programme and advocacy perspective, undertaking an evidence-based social policy analysis, advancing knowledge and documenting the demographic, social and economic conditions and trends of groups of interest or issues of relevance to equitable and sustainable social development.

18.19 The subprogramme will build on the experience gained during the past bienniums, and continue to advocate equity and social justice as guiding principles for public policymaking in member countries and civil society organizations in the region. During the biennium 2010-2011, specific attention will be paid to promoting and implementing an integrated social policy approach and devising measures that mainstream issues of the youth bulge, the disadvantaged and other vulnerable groups in public policymaking processes, in addition to focusing on population mobility and good urban governance.

18.20 Having documented and disseminated knowledge about social policy tools and institutional mechanisms, the subprogramme will seek to build the capacity of member countries to adopt and institutionalize social policy in their public policymaking. The subprogramme will also continue to assist member countries in the implementation of internationally agreed plans of actions and recommendations, including the Millennium Development Goals.

18.21 In order to achieve the expected accomplishments, the subprogramme will conduct meetings and undertake normative field analysis and technical cooperation activities, including advisory services, capacity development workshops and field projects. Social policy mechanisms in selected member countries will be tested and findings disseminated through publications, meetings and available information technology. Partnerships will be further strengthened with other regional commissions, United Nations agencies, international and regional organizations and civil society groups.

Subprogramme 3
Economic development and integration

Objective of the Organization: to attain sustainable economic development for reducing poverty through regional integration in a globalizing world

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Increased knowledge among stakeholders in the region of the issues that should be taken into account in designing and implementing suitable macroeconomic policies and strategies for sustainable economic growth, employment creation and poverty alleviation in line with the Millennium Development Goals	(a) (i) Increased number of stakeholders in the region acknowledging that they benefited from ESCWA analytical services and outputs in the area of macroeconomic policies and development strategies (ii) Increased number of requests for technical assistance, including advisory services, to promote and implement macroeconomic policy and development strategies based on ESCWA analytical work
(b) Enhanced capacity of member countries to formulate and/or implement policies and measures recommended by the Monterrey Consensus, taking into consideration the outcomes of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development, to be held in Doha in 2008	(b) Increased number of policies and/or measures adopted by member countries, with ESCWA assistance, to implement the Monterrey Consensus, taking into consideration the outcomes of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development
(c) Enhanced capacity of member countries to implement the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM) and other measures promoted by ESCWA in order to improve regional and international transport linkages, with due consideration to environmental issues	(c) (i) Increased number of policy measures and actions taken by member countries, with ESCWA assistance, to implement the ITSAM agreements and the National Transport and Trade Facilitation Committees (ii) Increased number of measures taken by member countries, with ESCWA assistance, to promote road safety and environmentally friendly and sustainable transport systems

(d) Enhanced capacity of member countries to negotiate and implement subregional, regional and multilateral trade agreements designed to increase intraregional and international trade	(d) (i) Increased number of requests for technical assistance, including advisory services, to participate in the Single Window Initiative based on ESCWA analytical work
	(ii) Increased number of instances where member countries acceded to, negotiated and/or implemented trade agreements based on ESCWA recommendations

Strategy

18.22 The responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies with the Economic Development and Globalization Division. The region as a whole shares several economic problems, including rising inflation, high unemployment rates, underdeveloped financial sectors and inadequate and unsafe transport systems that contribute to global warming. Furthermore, participation in the multilateral trading system and interregional and intraregional Arab trade remains below potential, and political instability could derail the region's aspirations for sustainable economic prosperity.

18.23 In order to achieve the expected accomplishments at the macroeconomic level, the subprogramme will engage in the following:

(a) A continuous assessment of the region's macroeconomic performance for timely identification and analysis of socially inclusive macroeconomic policy issues;

(b) Economic policy formulation and use of modelling forecasting and other quantitative approaches to formulate evidence-based policies and strategies for making progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and other internationally agreed development goals.

18.24 The subprogramme will also assist member countries in analysing and evaluating global and regional financial developments and propose regional strategies and coordinated responses. Emphasis will be placed on the development of strategic partnerships with financial institutions and development funds in order to promote the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and the outcomes of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development. In addition, the subprogramme will undertake normative and analytical studies on the role of foreign direct investment (FDI) flows within as well as into the region and assess the barriers hindering FDI flows into the region. Consequently, appropriate action to increase FDI flows in the region will be proposed.

18.25 Work will continue on the implementation of ITSAM, including the implementation and monitoring of international road, rail, maritime and multimodal transport agreements and conventions, and the trade and transport facilitation mechanisms and recommendations promoted therein. Special attention will be paid to the continued establishment and activation of national transport and trade facilitation committees and related regional coordination. The subprogramme will also serve as a regional platform to raise awareness on road safety issues and

provide environmentally friendly and sustainable transport systems in response to global concerns on those issues.

18.26 The subprogramme will continue to work to enhance interregional and intraregional trade through South-South cooperation, the elimination of non-tariff barriers and the introduction of trade facilitation measures, in particular through the application of information and communications technologies and the Single Window Initiative that aims to accelerate and simplify information flows between traders and Governments in order to bring meaningful gains to all parties involved in cross-border trade. ESCWA will also promote a more coherent approach that could result in a coordinated implementation of the aid-for-trade initiative.

18.27 The analytical outputs of the subprogramme will be utilized in order to enhance technical awareness, capacity and networking on policies and strategies pertaining to macroeconomic development issues, financing for development, promotion of trade and facilitation of transport in the region. Those aims will be achieved by organizing effective expert group meetings, workshops, training seminars and policy advisory services. Increased interaction with global and regional stakeholders and governmental and non-governmental bodies will be sought in order to promote regional cooperation in the above-mentioned areas.

Subprogramme 4
Information and communications technology for regional integration

Objective of the Organization: to narrow the digital divide and build an inclusive, people-centred and development-oriented information society in the ESCWA region in accordance with the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society and internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Perceptible improvements in the region's information and communications technology (ICT) sector, substantiated by the implementation of ICT strategies and action plans	(a) (i) Increased number of member countries formulating and/or implementing ICT strategies and action plans that are related to the development of the ICT sector, with ESCWA assistance
	(ii) Increased number of regional partnerships, projects and initiatives aimed at creating ICT applications, improving ICT services and developing digital Arabic content, with ESCWA assistance
(b) Enhanced capacity of member countries to measure and benchmark their progress towards the realization of the information society, and realign policies and strategies accordingly, giving due consideration to gender dimensions	(b) (i) Increased number of member countries collecting data and producing reliable and gender-sensitive statistics and indicators on the information society in accordance with international standards and relevant models, with ESCWA assistance

	(ii) Increased number of member countries analysing data with a view to drafting new or reformulating existing ICT policies, strategies and action plans, with ESCWA assistance

Strategy

18.28 The responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies with the Information and Communication Technology Division. The digital divide remains an impediment to development in the ESCWA region. At the internal level, the divide exists between the countries of GCC and other member countries, on the one hand, and between urban and rural areas, on the other; and at the external level, between the region and other regions of the world. Currently, most ICT indicators for the region as a whole are lower than world averages. At the same time, the region has development potential, in particular in terms of the common language and cultural heritage, that must be harnessed in order to build the information society. Greater efforts must be exerted in order to increase literacy and education levels and tap human resources and talent, especially among women and the growing youth population. With continued monitoring of activities pertaining to the World Summit on the Information Society Tunis Agenda for the Information Society and the efforts made to implement the ESCWA Regional Plan of Action for Building the Information Society, the subprogramme will strive to adapt the Tunis Agenda to better serve the region and fine-tune plans of action in order to build an inclusive, people-centred information society that is based on productive national ICT sectors.

18.29 The subprogramme will carry out analytical studies, convene meetings and provide advisory services to support that endeavour, act as a catalyst for changes in policymaking in member countries and develop a more comprehensive set of ICT measurements and indicators that will help strategic decision-making to identify priority areas of policy action. It will also assess and revise plans of action, monitor progress, evaluate impacts and benchmark national development with other countries based on international indices, with a view to improving the productivity and competitiveness of the ICT sector in the region.

18.30 In order to enhance national capacity and take advantage of the digital opportunities pertaining to socio-economic development in the region, pilot field projects will be implemented in selected ESCWA member countries. Field projects will incorporate a social dimension through the active involvement of local communities, with a focus on youth employment and the empowerment of women, in order to build a people-centred information society.

18.31 The subprogramme will also place special emphasis on promoting an enabling environment and harnessing the development of ICT thematic applications, including e-Government and digital Arabic content, with the aim of building on ICT as an agent of change to empower citizens and improve the quality of life.

18.32 Building on the accomplishments of the previous biennium in activating partnerships for implementing ICT projects, the subprogramme will enhance regional collaboration and partnerships in activities that can lead to an inclusive, people-centred information society and will contribute to fund-raising efforts aimed at harnessing ICT for socio-economic development. To that end, it will promote the establishment of mechanisms aimed at exchanging information and sharing

knowledge among regional players and with counterparts outside the region. The subprogramme will also seek close coordination and joint efforts with other ESCWA subprogrammes and with international and regional organizations in order to achieve more effective results.

Subprogramme 5
Statistics for evidence-based policymaking

Objective of the Organization: to improve the production and dissemination of quality socio-economic statistics and indicators, including Millennium Development Goals indicators and gender-disaggregated data, in order to facilitate evidence-based policymaking by national and international decision makers and civil society

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Progress in improving the national institutional framework for official statistics, in particular in conflict-stricken countries and those where statistics are not fully developed	(a) (i) Increased number of good practices of the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics followed by the national statistical offices of conflict-stricken countries and those where statistics are not fully developed, with ESCWA assistance (ii) Increased number of national statistical offices following good dissemination practices in line with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, with ESCWA assistance
(b) Enhanced capacity of national statistical offices to produce and disseminate relevant, timely, reliable and comparable economic and social statistics and indicators, including gender-disaggregated data, in compliance with international standards and recommendations	(b) (i) Increased percentage of core statistics and indicators disseminated by member countries (ii) Increased number of new and/or revised international statistical standards and recommendations implemented by national statistical offices

Strategy

18.33 The responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies with the Statistics Division. There is a need to improve the production and dissemination of statistics in the region, bring the national statistical systems in line with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and develop methodologies for improving data comparability at the regional level in social, economic and cross-cutting issues. Addressing those challenges will strengthen the role of statistics in evidence-based policymaking, monitoring and evaluating the impact of development policy and following up on international conferences and summits, including the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements.

18.34 During the biennium, the subprogramme aims to focus on two key areas, namely, (a) adherence to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, and (b) capacity-building of national statistical offices to produce and disseminate quality statistics and indicators to monitor economic and social development, including the Millennium Development Goals indicators.

18.35 In respect of the first area, the subprogramme will advocate the importance of full adherence to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and build the capacity of national statistical offices to implement them, especially those which address the following issues:

(a) The importance of the impartiality of official statistics and their availability to the public;

(b) The use of appropriate methods and procedures for the collection, processing, storage and presentation of statistical data;

(c) The presentation of information on sources and methods according to internationally agreed standards. The subprogramme will facilitate opportunities for conflict-stricken countries and those where statistics are not fully developed to learn from good practices identified at the international level and in other member countries in the region through South-South cooperation.

18.36 In the second area, the subprogramme will continue upgrading the knowledge and skills of the national statistical offices in collecting and preparing trade and sectoral statistics, implementing the 1993 System of National Accounts and its revision, and introducing regional approaches to measure societal progress that complement the traditional Millennium Development Goals framework. The subprogramme will also pursue the development of gender-disaggregated data in follow-up to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and provide technical support to ensure the effective participation of member countries in the 2010 round of population and housing censuses. Furthermore, it will initiate the development of climate change indicators for the region.

18.37 In order to achieve the expected accomplishments, the subprogramme will carry out analytical work, provide regional forums to facilitate knowledge-sharing and implement technical cooperation activities, including field projects, training workshops and advisory services on priority issues.

18.38 The subprogramme will pursue its objectives in accordance with the United Nations Principles Governing International Statistical Activities and will implement its work in partnership with the Statistics Division in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, other regional commissions, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and such regional organizations as the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization, the Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting, GCC and LAS, with a view to harmonizing and coordinating statistics in the region in accordance with international standards and recommendations.

Subprogramme 6
Advancement of women

Objective of the Organization: to reduce gender imbalances and empower women in the ESCWA region in accordance with internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, while paying due attention to regional specificities

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Enhanced capacity of national mechanisms, especially those in conflict-stricken countries, to be effective agents for mainstreaming gender into national policies, plans and programmes	(a) (i) Increased number of effective measures taken by national mechanisms, with ESCWA assistance, to promote the mainstreaming of gender into national policies, plans and programmes (ii) Increased number of incidents whereby national mechanisms applied ESCWA-developed guidelines on the protection of the rights of women living in conflict-stricken areas
(b) Enhanced capacity of member countries to implement and monitor the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	(b) (i) Increased number of measures taken by member countries, with ESCWA assistance, to review and adjust laws in conformity with CEDAW (ii) Increased number of national and local media interventions to promote the need to review and adjust laws in conformity with CEDAW

Strategy

18.39 The responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies with the ESCWA Centre for Women. Notwithstanding the progress accomplished by ESCWA member countries towards the advancement of women, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, the economic participation of women and their representation at the economic and political decision-making levels continue to be lower than in other regions of the world. The situation of women has further deteriorated because of armed conflict, civil strife and lack of stability. Building on the experience gained in past bienniums, the subprogramme will concentrate on two main areas, namely, (a) the capacity-building of national mechanisms, especially those in conflict-stricken countries, to be effective agents for change and act as coordinators with policymakers and civil society for promoting gender mainstreaming in national policies, plans and programmes, and (b) the capacity-building of member countries to make further progress in the implementation and monitoring of CEDAW. They will be pursued in accordance with the outcomes of a 2009 regional meeting for the ESCWA region in preparation for the 15-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

18.40 In respect of the first area, the subprogramme aims to intensify its effort to enhance the institutional capacity of national mechanisms through regular

dissemination of new knowledge on gender issues, the provision of advocacy tools and research methodology, and the development of in-house training, knowledge and skills. The subprogramme will also provide forums in which national mechanisms in the ESCWA and other regions can actively share knowledge and experiences. In line with that endeavour, due attention will be paid to the national mechanisms in conflict-stricken countries in order to address the special needs of women living in those areas and promote their active participation in decision-making, conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

18.41 In the second area, the subprogramme will target the capacity-building of national mechanisms, members of parliament, the judiciary and civil society institutions, notably the media, to monitor the progress achieved in the implementation of CEDAW. While almost all ESCWA member countries ratified the Convention, reservations on some substantive articles hinder full implementation. The subprogramme will therefore aim to enhance the capacity of those stakeholders to address critical issues and take concrete measures in that regard.

18.42 The subprogramme has been active in fostering relationships between Government bodies dealing with the empowerment and advancement of women and civil society organizations through meetings to analyse and discuss the situation of women at the regional level. It will continue to work closely with other United Nations entities and regional organizations, including the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Population Fund, the UNDP Subregional Resource Facility for Arab States, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, ILO, LAS, the Arab Women Organization of Jordan and the Center for Arab Women Training and Research, in order to consolidate and enhance the impact of development support in the area of the advancement of women in the region.

Subprogramme 7
Conflict mitigation and development

Objective of the Organization: to reduce the impact of conflict and instability on people and socio-economic development in the ESCWA region

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Increased understanding by member countries of the political and socio-economic dynamics, sources and root causes of instability and their long-term consequences	(a) (i) Increased number of national Government officials and civil society representatives participating in and providing input to ESCWA normative activities (ii) Increased number of member Governments and civic entities using information provided by ESCWA on sources and root causes of instability and their consequences

(b) Enhanced capacity of member countries to formulate and/or implement development policies and measures, including good governance practices, that aim to mitigate conflict and address sources of instability	(b) (i) Increased number of ESCWA-promoted policies and/or measures considered by public and civic entities that mitigate the impact of conflict through development, including good governance practices (ii) Increased number of public and civic entities preparing and implementing development policies and measures with ESCWA assistance

Strategy

18.43 The responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies with the Section for Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues. Ongoing conflicts or political tensions in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen involving the competing interests of regional and international alliances have profoundly affected national and regional security and stability, and reversed development. Those dangers are coupled with the lack of democratic public institutions and regressive human rights and civic standards. That situation continues to create a host of social, economic and political challenges, including growing ethnic-sectarian tensions, the continuous influx of displaced persons and the rise of non-State actors. The combination of those factors is also jeopardizing the future of the region's youth and rendering civic and public actors incapable of addressing challenges in the spheres of good governance and the environment, including the dangers posed by the scarcity of water and global warming.

18.44 The subprogramme plans to address the aforementioned problems by focusing on two key areas, namely, (a) identifying and monitoring emerging trends and addressing root causes of conflict and political instability, and (b) promoting good governance and civic values. In addition, it aims to mainstream conflict-related issues in the ESCWA programme.

18.45 In respect of the first area, the subprogramme will appraise the regional situation and predict emerging trends through regular monitoring of political dynamics and their impact on socio-economic development and political reform. Assessment of the dynamics unleashed by conflict and political tensions remains essential in forecasting emerging trends at the local and regional levels. Specific case studies on the relevant emerging political, social and economic issues will be carried out alongside expert group meetings, workshops and consultations with stakeholders, including public and civic entities. Ample research needs to be dedicated to modalities rendering development interventions sustainable over the long term, enabling the realization of development goals in spite of conflict and political tensions. The subprogramme will also examine the repercussions of conflict areas on neighbouring countries and on the region as a whole. The normative activities will be carried out in cooperation with, and be disseminated to, the relevant public and civic decision makers.

18.46 In the second area, the subprogramme will examine the commonalities of religious, traditional, human rights and civic values in order to facilitate new domestic approaches to good governance. Capacity-building on good governance

and civic values for peacebuilding and conflict mitigation will be based on the results of the normative work of the subprogramme, which is geared towards addressing the root causes of governance degradation in the ESCWA region, as well as on measures identified to promote good governance practices in the contexts of peacebuilding and conflict mitigation.

18.47 As part of the objective of mainstreaming conflict-related issues in the ESCWA programme, and in cooperation with other entities, the subprogramme will also tackle, as cross-cutting issues, the challenges of meeting local development goals and needs despite conflict and political tension. The pillar of that strategy will be the development of local and regional capacities in the most crucial sectors, in order to ensure local ownership and sustainability of initiatives undertaken by the subprogramme and link humanitarian, developmental and reconstruction needs in crisis areas. The subprogramme will also strive to build strong work relationships within the United Nations system and with international, regional and civic institutions.

Legislative mandates

General Assembly resolutions

55/2	United Nations Millennium Declaration
57/270 A and B	Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic and social fields
60/1	2005 World Summit Outcome
60/2	Policies and programmes involving youth (subprogrammes 2, 3 and 5)
60/265	Follow-up to the development outcome of the 2005 World Summit, including the Millennium Development Goals and the other internationally agreed development goals
61/1	Declaration of the high-level meeting of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly on the midterm comprehensive global review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010
61/14	Cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States
61/16	Strengthening of the Economic and Social Council
61/49	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference
61/157	Human rights and extreme poverty
61/213	Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)
61/266	Multilingualism
62/161	The right to development
62/199	Globalization and interdependence

62/203	Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries
62/208	Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system
62/209	South-South cooperation
62/211	Towards global partnerships

Economic and Social Council resolutions

1818 (LV)	Establishment of an economic commission for Western Asia
1985/69	Amendment of the terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Western Asia: change of name of the Commission
1998/46	Further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields
2005/50	The Damascus Declaration and the role of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration
2006/14	Progress in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 59/250 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system
2007/29	Role of the Economic and Social Council in the integrated and coordinated implementation of the outcomes of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits, in light of relevant General Assembly resolutions, including resolution 61/16
2007/31	Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010
2007/33	Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions

258 (XXIII)	Strengthening technical cooperation in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
260 (XXIII)	Development and regional cooperation under unstable conditions
261 (XXIII)	Strengthening the cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States in the field of economic and social development
263 (XXIII)	Promoting partnership and resource mobilization
268 (XXIII)	Adoption of the final reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
269 (XXIV)	The role of ESCWA in the light of the 2005 World Summit Outcome document and the subsequent change process
272 (XXIV)	Youth employment in ESCWA member countries

Subprogramme 1
Integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development

General Assembly resolutions

57/253	World Summit on Sustainable Development
59/228	Activities undertaken during the International Year of Freshwater, 2003, preparations for the International Decade for Action, "Water for Life", 2005-2015, and further efforts to achieve the sustainable development of water resources
59/235	Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa
60/200	International Year of Deserts and Desertification, 2006
61/215	Industrial development cooperation
62/189	Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development
62/190	Agricultural technology for development
62/193	Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa
62/197	Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy

Economic and Social Council resolution

2004/48	Coordinated and integrated United Nations system approach to promoting rural development in developing countries, with due consideration to least developed countries, for poverty eradication and sustainable development

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolution

255 (XXIII)	The establishment of a regional mechanism for building capacities to manage shared water resources

Subprogramme 2
Integrated social policies

General Assembly resolutions

61/208	International migration and development
62/126	Policies and programmes involving youth: youth in the global economy — promoting youth participation in social and economic development

62/127	Implementation of the World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons: realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities
62/129	Follow-up to the tenth anniversary of the International Year of the Family and beyond
62/130	Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing
62/131	Implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly
62/156	Protection of migrants
62/170	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol
62/198	Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Economic and Social Council resolutions

2005/9	Further promotion of equalization of opportunities by, for and with persons with disabilities and protection of their human rights
2006/4	Sustained economic growth for social development, including the eradication of poverty and hunger
2006/15	Promoting youth employment
2006/16	Comprehensive and integral international convention to protect and promote the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities
2006/18	Future organization and methods of work of the Commission for Social Development
2007/2	The role of the United Nations system in providing full and productive employment and decent work for all

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolution

277 (XXIV)	Social development policies

Subprogramme 3
Economic development and integration

General Assembly resolutions

60/5	Improving global road safety
62/184	International trade and development
62/186	External debt and development: towards a durable solution to the debt problems of developing countries

62/187 Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus

Economic and Social Council resolutions

2006/4 Sustained economic growth for social development, including the eradication of poverty and hunger

2007/2 The role of the United Nations system in providing full and productive employment and decent work for all

2007/30 Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions

256 (XXIII) Adoption of the memorandum of understanding on maritime transport cooperation in the Arab Mashreq

257 (XXIII) Selection of the routes to be given priority in implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq

265 (XXIII) Regional cooperation in the field of road traffic safety

270 (XXIV) Macroeconomic policy for financial stability

279 (XXIV) Follow-up to implementation of components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq

Subprogramme 4
Information and communications technology for regional integration

General Assembly resolution

60/252 World Summit on the Information Society

62/201 Science and technology for development

Economic and Social Council resolutions

2004/68 Science and technology for development

2006/46 Follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society and review of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development

2007/8 Flow of information for the follow-up to the World Summit on the Information Society

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions

245 (XXII) The ESCWA initiative for activating the role of science, technology and technological innovation in achieving the Millennium Development Goals

273 (XXIV) Follow-up to the development of the Information Society in Western Asia

274 (XXIV) The establishment of the ESCWA Technology Centre

Subprogramme 5
Statistics for evidence-based policymaking

General Assembly resolutions

61/143 Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women

62/127 Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons: realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities

62/130 Follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing

62/132 Violence against women migrant workers

62/206 Women in development

Economic and Social Council resolutions

2004/11 Agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality

2005/13 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme

2006/6 Strengthening statistical capacity

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions

262 (XXIII) Support for the capacities of member countries in the field of statistics and the International Comparison Programme

276 (XXIV) Strengthening statistical capacities in the ESCWA region

Subprogramme 6
Advancement of women

General Assembly resolutions

62/133 Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women

62/137 Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

62/206 Women in development

62/218 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Economic and Social Council resolutions

2003/44	Agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on women's participation in and access to the media, and information and communication technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women
2004/12	Agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution and in post-conflict peacebuilding
2006/9	Future organization and methods of work of the Commission on the Status of Women
2007/7	Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolution

278 (XXIV)	Increasing the role of women in decision-making with respect to conflict prevention and peacebuilding

Subprogramme 7
Conflict mitigation and development

General Assembly resolutions

62/93	Assistance to the Palestinian people
62/146	The right of the Palestinian people to self-determination
62/181	Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

Economic and Social Council resolutions

2005/3	Public administration and development
2007/26	Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

Security Council resolution

1645 (2005)	Post-conflict peacebuilding

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolutions

260 (XXIII)	Development and regional cooperation under unstable conditions
271 (XXIV)	Strengthening the role of ESCWA in addressing the impact of conflict and instability within the context of social and economic development